

Interpersonal Stress Linked to Racism: Racial Bias and its Health Consequences

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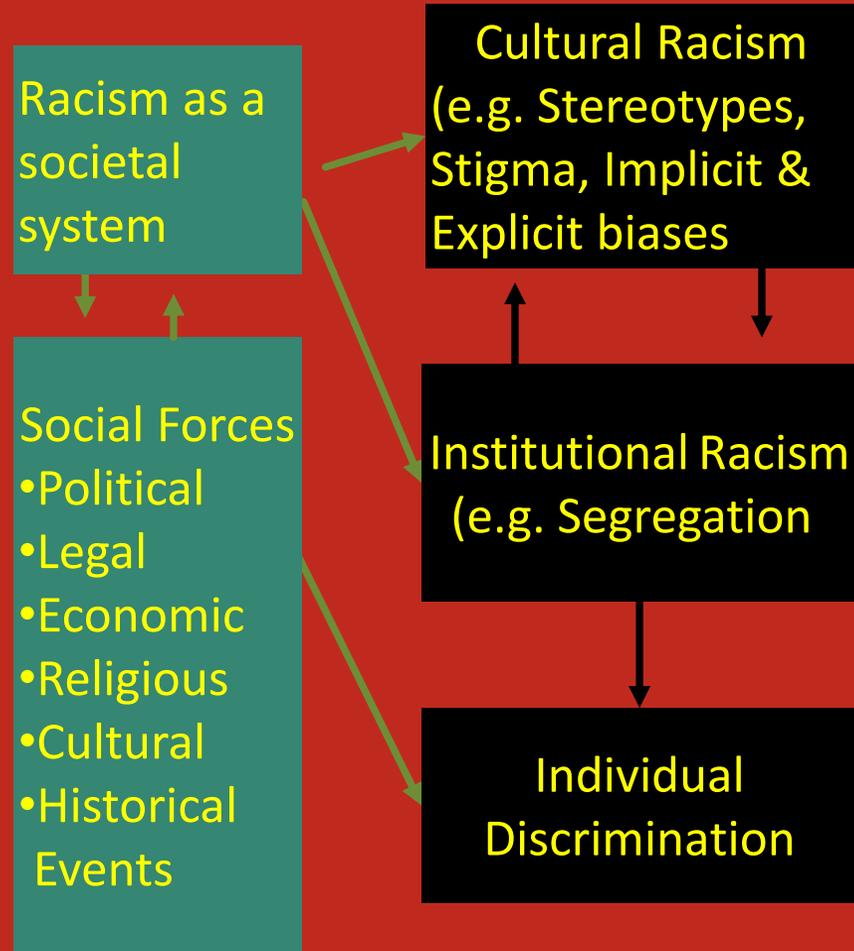
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The opinions, findings and conclusions expressed by speakers during this event are strictly my own and do not necessarily represent the opinion, views or policies of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH), Office of Minority Health (OMH) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS); nor does mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement.

The House that Racism Built



Segregation, SES, Stress and Health

Lower economic status, living in disadvantaged, segregated, neighborhoods leads to to higher levels of exposure and greater clustering of:

1. Economic Stressors
2. Psychosocial Stressors
3. Physical & Chemical Stressors



Individual Discrimination

Experiences of discrimination are
an added source of Toxic Stress

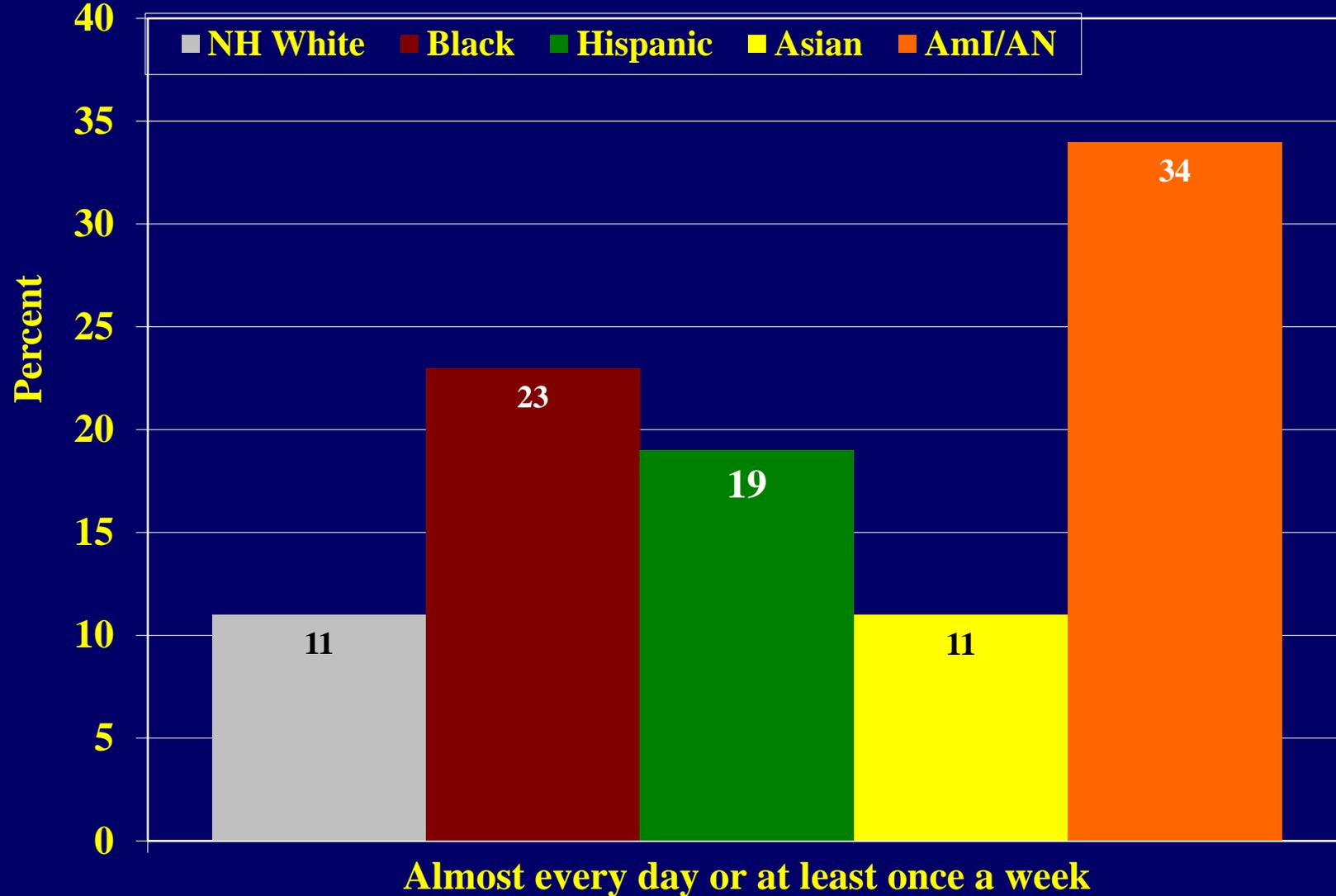
Every Day Discrimination

In your day-to-day life how often do these happen to you?

- You are treated with less courtesy than other people.
- You are treated with less respect than other people.
- You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores.
- People act as if they think you are not smart.
- People act as if they are afraid of you.
- People act as if they think you are dishonest.
- People act as if they're better than you are.
- You are called names or insulted.
- You are threatened or harassed.

What do you think was the main reason for these experiences?

Everyday Discrimination, 2015



American Psychological Association, Stress in America, 2016

Everyday Discrimination and Health

Incident

- Metabolic Syndrome
- CVD outcomes
- Breast cancer
- Type 2 diabetes

Nicotine dependence
Binge eating
Smoking & drug use
At-risk drinking

CAC (coronary artery calcification)
IMT (intima media thickness)
Visceral fat
HRV
Atrial fibrillation

Adult onset asthma
Nocturnal amb. BP
Cognitive function
Increases in SBP, DBP

Sleep duration
Sleep quality

Inflammation (CRP, IL-6, e-selectin)
Cortisol
Telomere length
Allostatic load

Waist circumference
Obesity
Weight gain

Breast cancer screening
Cervical cancer screening
Lower adherence
Delays in seeking treatment

DSM Disorders
Emotional Distress
Well-being
Changes in personality

Hidden Ways in which Stressors linked
to Race and Racism Adversely affect
Health

Online Discrimination and Mental Health

- Study of 264 youth, aged 14 to 18
- Victimization in texts, chats, forums, online games, social network sites, etc
- After adjustment for age, gender, ethnicity, other adolescent stress, and offline discrimination
 - Online individual discrimination was positively related to depression and anxiety symptoms



Exposure to Traumatic Videos

- Study of black and Latinx adolescents (11-19 years old)
- Assessed viewing race-related, traumatic images or videos online: seeing persons from own ethnic group 1) beaten, 2) arrested or detained, or 3) being shot by the police
- Exposure to online traumas in prior year linked to higher PTSD and depressive symptoms
- Need to assess and facilitate coping with race-related materials



Worry About Safety of Children

- Study of black women found that most live with a heavy burden of stress due to concern about the racism their children might experience
- Over 70% were “very concerned:”
 - that their children might be harmed by the police
 - that their children might get stopped in a predominantly white neighborhood



Police Stops and Mother's Health - 1

- A study of over 3,000 mothers in 20 cities (Fragile Families Study)
- 23% of urban youth are stopped by the police by the age of 15
- Mothers of youth who were stopped by the police are more than twice as likely to report both depression- and anxiety-related sleep difficulties.



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Police Violence and Health

- Frequent media reports of incidents of police violence directed to black, Latino, and Native American communities
- These are stressors that negatively affect health of larger community
- Recent national, quasi-experimental study:
- Police killings of unarmed blacks lead to declines in mental health among blacks in general population for 3 months after event
- No effect on whites



Consequences of the cumulative exposure to
discrimination and other stressors

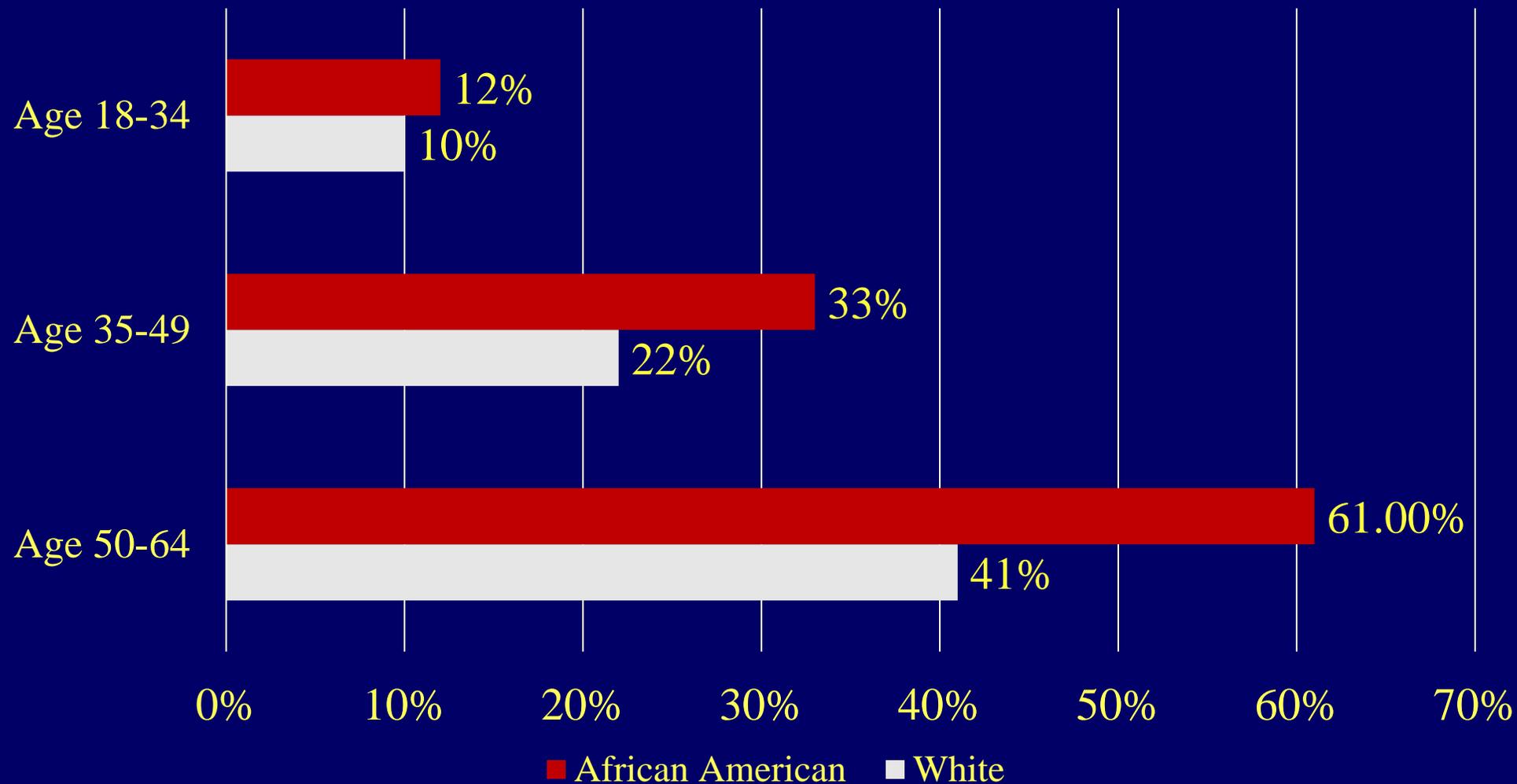
“Accelerated Aging”

“Premature Aging”

Biological “Weathering”

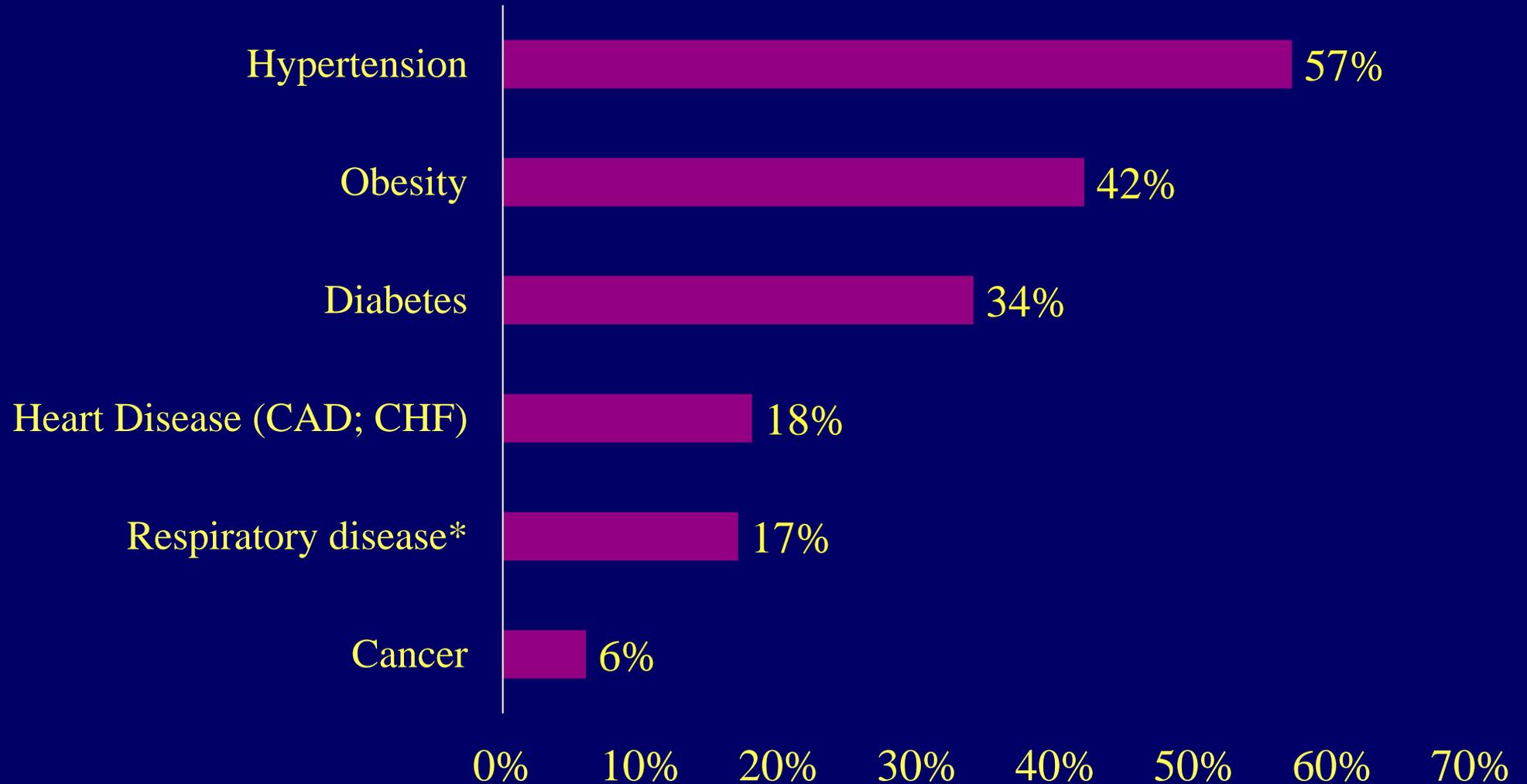
Earlier Onset of Chronic Disease

Earlier Onset of High Blood Pressure

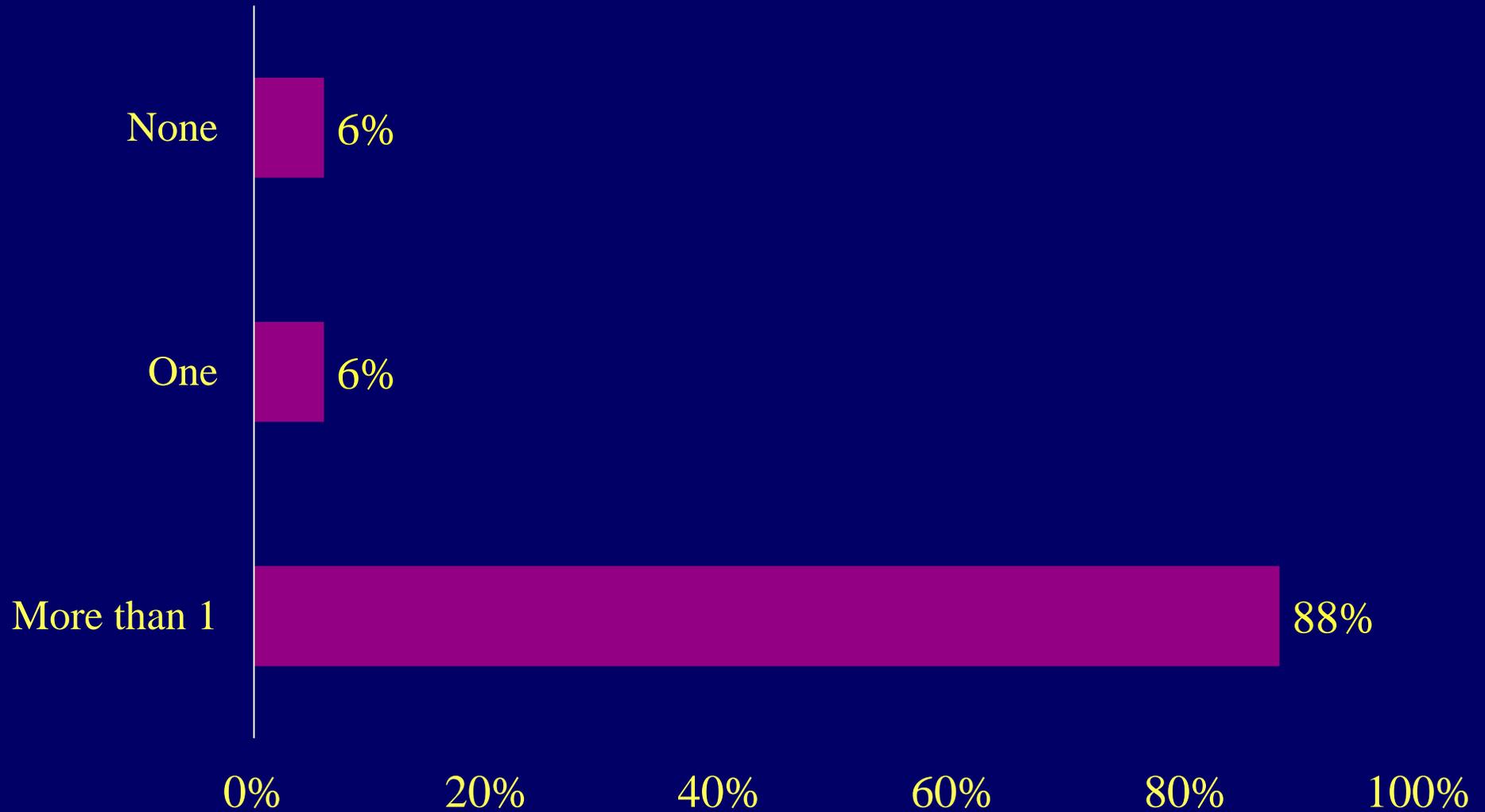


Comorbidities of Covid-19 Patients

5,700 patients, 12 NY hospitals, March 1 to April 4; Av age :63



Number of Comorbidities, Covid-19 Patients



Identifying Protective factors and Resilience Resources

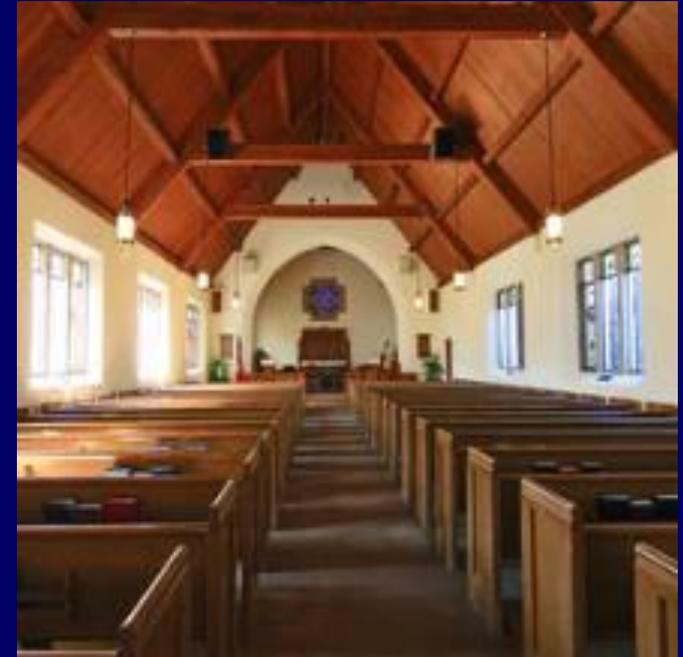
Discrimination, Social Ties, Biomarkers

- 331 Black adolescents in 9 rural counties in Georgia
- **Discrimination assessed at age 16, 17, and 18**
- Stably high levels of discrimination as a teen linked to higher biomarkers (overnight cortisol, epinephrine, norepinephrine, SBP, DBP, CRP, BMI) at age 20
- **Social support: 11 item caregiver emotional & instrumental support and 4 item measure of peer support**
- High social support (caregiver and peer) erased the negative effect of high discrimination on biomarkers



Religion & Discrimination: A Balm in Gilead?

- Prospective analyses of the National Study of Black Americans found that multiple aspects of religious engagement:
 - religious attendance
 - church-based social support
 - seeking religious guidance in everyday life
- reduced the negative effects of experiences of discrimination on mental health



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Further Reading

David R Williams & Lisa A. Cooper, “*Reducing Racial Inequities in Health: Using What We Already Know to Take Action.*” International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 16 (4), 606, 2019.